

## Social Amplification and Traffic: Driving Web Page Views and Visits with Facebook Publishing

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution's AJC.com team is tasked with driving traffic and new audiences to generate page views and visits in an era when traditional media companies know they need transformational changes to meet revenue and growth goals. They are managed by a team from the organization's Newsroom and the business-side Audience Digital Group. The combined team knew a powerful way to draw more traffic to their sites would be to amplify their content to the [1.4 billion users on Facebook](#). But to move at social speed and drive fickle readers to their sites, they needed technology that could help them capture topical, trending content as it started to build social heat, expand their editorial capacity to produce engaging articles of regional interest, and optimize what they produced to ensure they connected with their audiences in an age of declining organic reach.

Partnering with PublishThis and SocialFlow, the AJC teams were able to achieve goals for traffic, referral clicks, and much more. Here's their story:

### THE CHALLENGE

AJC's newsroom already was producing high-quality editorial content, particularly in the areas of blogs, breaking news and sports. AJC conducted detailed research on the specifics of what the community expected. The feedback was clear: their audience was interested in a comprehensive source of information and a trusted place to go for the latest and best news that was relevant for their community. Moreover, the audience also wanted the best of what was out there elsewhere on the web – curated by a trusted source. To provide all that content, Mike Lupo, Sr. Director of Digital Products, knew the company was going to need to expand the range and volume of articles produced. However, the lead-time on



"PublishThis allows us to give our users something they've asked for: Show us the best of what's out there on the web. Engagement with PublishThis curated content rivals and sometimes exceeds that of branded content."

**Mike Lupo**, Sr. Director of Digital Products

content production of newly written staff articles was long and they were already at capacity.

"The feedback seemed to be that a curated experience would actually help our audience - they wanted the news now, regardless of where it came from," said Lupo.

Additionally, AJC's social media manager saw an opportunity to expand the audience by promoting content on social networks. They couldn't keep sharing the same 12 articles in the hyper-consumption world of Facebook and expect to reach their audiences when the battle for attention is at its pinnacle. Lupo believed it was essential to supplement their content in a smart way that would also increase visibility in order to drive more traffic to Cox Newspaper sites.

"We knew that developing a social audience to drive clicks back to our site was going to require a higher velocity of publishing than our team was capable of producing on its own," said Lupo. "We needed to ride the wave of trending content. Once we engaged these new readers and got them to our site, we could steer them to our original content."

## THE SOLUTION

AJC.com identified PublishThis, the leading content discovery, curation, and publishing platform, as the right technology to help his team ramp up content production. Having heard about other successful Cox Media projects like Rare.us (one of the fastest growing news sites that also launched with PublishThis), Mike realized the platform could help his team monitor trending and hyper-local content while also encouraging them to recirculate content from Cox's branded news sites.

Mike's audience development team started to use PublishThis to curate content and then promote the pages to social. The social amplification had two purposes: while driving traffic back to the page was the primary reason to post the link, the posts helped the team keep their social presence fresh and frequent.

To overcome the challenge of reach and engagement, they turned to SocialFlow. **SocialFlow's data-driven solution** is the platform used across Cox Media Group that **helps them understand when their audiences were online and ready to be engaged**. Using real-time data, the platform would determine the optimal time to publish, allowing them to reach the largest possible audience.

While the editorial team was still producing original content based on the news of the day, Mike's audience development team could also **create a "short-form" curated article from a trending news story and share it along with a summary right away** to provide immediate news coverage. If the newsroom editors decided to write their own "long-form" article on the subject once they saw developments and did some research, they found out that both story formats could co-exist on their web site as long as their original content reported on the story as it progressed and the title of the article reflected an update.

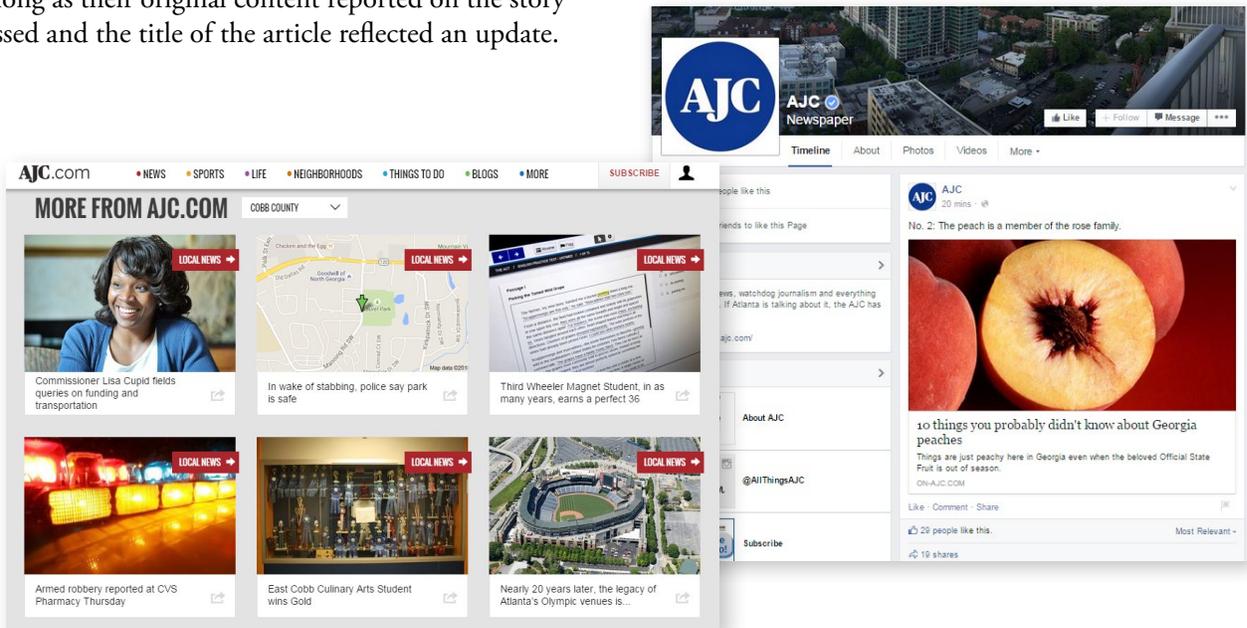
"We've learned that the social audience just wants the news. Not curating the first story on it or not creating a short-form curated post just because you're planning to do a full article on the story later is shooting yourself in the foot," said Lupo.

Mike's team found out that they could predictably get exceptional performance from PublishThis curated posts that took only a fraction of the time to produce, allowing other content creators more time to focus on original articles without sacrificing their production schedule.

The content creators learned to split their time, curating articles in 5-10 minutes that they learned could get as many shares as the longer news briefs they wrote; **sometimes the curated articles would significantly outpace what they wrote**, including more visits, page views and social referrals.

"While we could invest the time to manually write and source an article around a trending topic, our team knows that we can use a technology and streamlined workflow like PublishThis to create a curated post with some quick editorial annotation that takes minutes and often with similar page view gains," said Lupo. "PublishThis provides us the flexibility to build a mix of content formats to drive our page views higher and increase revenue."

Lupo added, "Furthermore, by **watching the trending content in PublishThis, we can see which content we should write about**, helping the editors build content that we know will perform. This data-driven approach to content ideation goes well beyond just augmenting our work with curation; this is helping us be more successful with original content work, too."



With SocialFlow’s solution determining the best time to distribute the posts to Facebook, editors are able to focus on what is truly important to them: content. By leveraging optimized publishing practices they were able to **increase the overall reach and engagements per message**. Here’s a visualization on how SocialFlow works:

“We’re a data-driven team and we’re always watching the metrics to see what works best and how we can reproduce past successes. That’s where SocialFlow has been key in helping us optimize when our content should go out,” said Lupo. “Optimizing publication time is another important factor to make sure we’re maximizing engagement from all the content we produce.”



**HOW IT WORKS:**

- Content sources are automatically pulled into the platform (including PublishThis feeds)
- Cox Newspaper Group sets publishing rules and parameters (frequency caps, minimum publishing frequency, etc.).
- The SocialFlow platform analyzes real-time conversational data and automatically delivers the most relevant message at the right time.
- SocialFlow automatically alerts the editorial team when the algorithm identifies posts that are performing well amongst their current followers.
- SocialFlow makes it easy to boost the best performing editorial content to audiences like their audiences. It’s easy to select audiences or interests to target based on people with similar profiles to your audience or acquisition campaigns.

## THE RESULTS

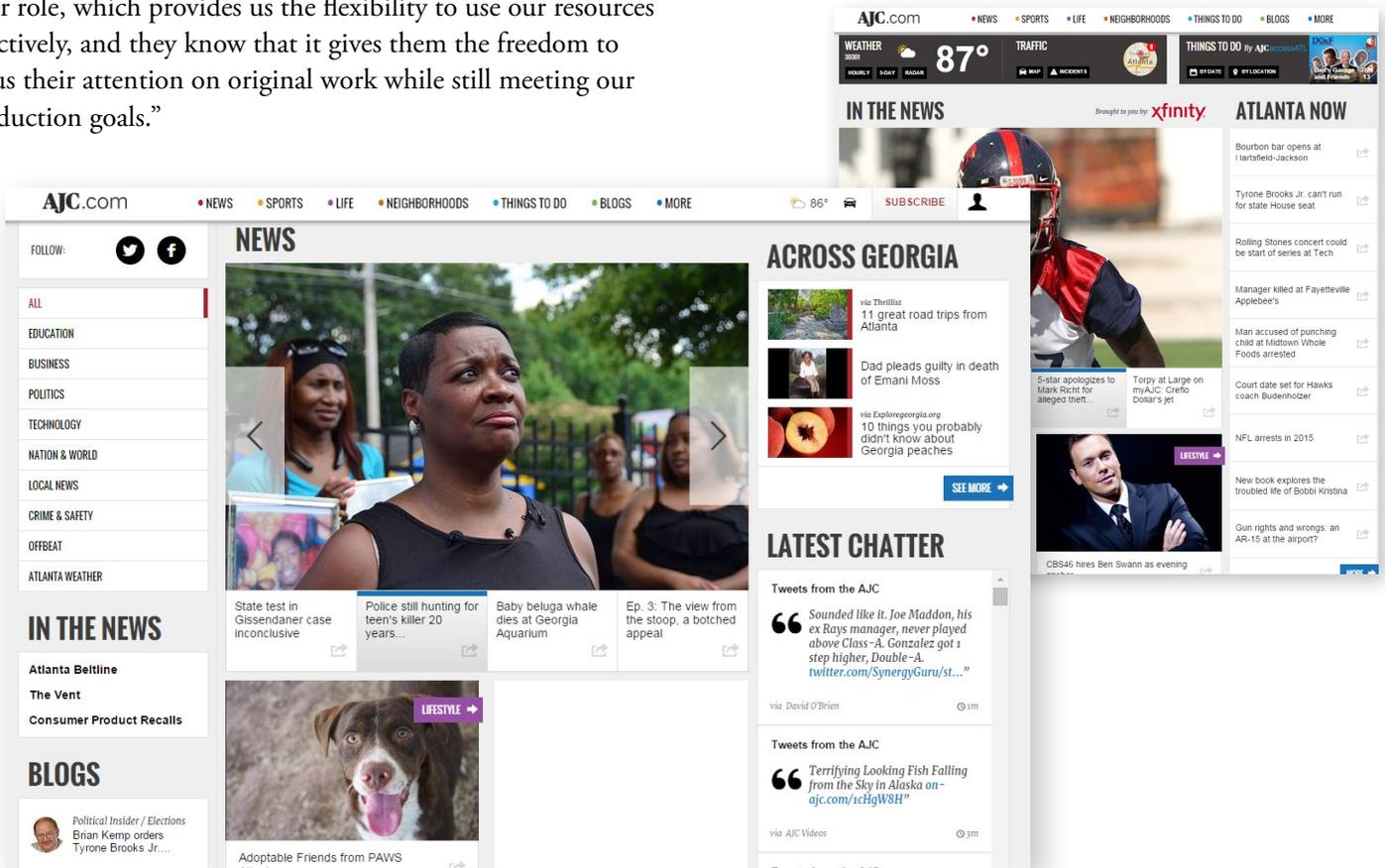
In a short time, each social post was driving thousands of clicks along with social shares and likes that fed into the social feeds of the Facebook users who interacted with each story. Although they work to keep a steady stream of content flowing through their system daily, when they produce less content, SocialFlow’s reporting helps them ensure the content is posting at the ideal time to build social engagement.

“PublishThis has been a powerful tool to help us scale our efforts and give our editorial team the flexibility to use the content formats they need to deliver on page views and revenue,” said Lupo.

“The editors on the audience development team and many in the newsroom have embraced the fact that curation is part of their role, which provides us the flexibility to use our resources effectively, and they know that it gives them the freedom to focus their attention on original work while still meeting our production goals.”

“Meanwhile, SocialFlow has been an important part of making sure we can anticipate the right time to launch the content we invest most heavily in so we ensure we’re maximizing our bang for the buck,” said Lupo.

- **1000’s of clicks** from PublishThis curated posts
- **5X more traffic** per editor’s output
- **29% increase in clicks** by optimizing post times



“PublishThis and SocialFlow have been key parts of the solution stack that is letting us drive our revenue and growth goals forward.”

–Mike Lupo, The Atlanta-Journal Constitution

Learn more about how PublishThis can help you deliver better content more often.

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